

Measuring the Success of the EMO Western States Championship Horse Show

A Senior Project

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By

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project was to determine whether or not the 2016 EMO Western States Championship Show was successful, and analyze if it should become an annual event. In this project, survey data and analysis pertaining to the 2016 Inaugural EMO Western States Championship Show will be found.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In July of 2016, the Western States Affiliates Inc. will host the first ever Western States Championship Horse Show, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Registered American Quarter Horses and American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) members from states west of the Mississippi are invited to compete for EMO Western States Championship Trophies and cash awards. Divisions will include open, amateur and youth with rail, trail, pleasure driving, speed events, cowhorse, roping and halter classes (Western States Affiliates, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The author intends to assist Western States Affiliates Inc. in measuring the success of the EMO Western States Championship Show, to ensure the show serves its intended purpose. One method of accomplishing this is to directly ask the show exhibitors why they are attending the show. The show's stated objective is to provide those with limited funds, travel time, or perceived lack of experience, an opportunity to show at a championships-style event located within the Western United States (Western States Affiliates, 2015).

### **Importance of the Project**

Keeping a constant flow of new members and retaining current members is important to any organization. A stagnant organization will find itself with low membership numbers and low event turnouts. The researcher seeks to ensure the show is actually working as a stepping-stone between novice level events

and World Championship level events. If the show is not serving its intended purpose, organization efforts should be directed to a new area.

### **Purpose of the project**

The purpose of the project is to determine whether or not the 2016 EMO Western States Championship Show is successful, and analyze if it should become an annual event.

### **Objective of the Project**

To collaborate with Western States Affiliates Inc. in measuring the success of the EMO Western States Championship Show in meeting its stated goals of creating a championship- style event as a stepping-stone between Novice Championship Shows and AQHA Open, Amateur, Select, and AQHYA World Shows.

Objectives:

- Survey at least 100 show exhibitors
- Provide a statistical analysis to Western States Affiliates Inc.
- Determine the show's levels of success as perceived by exhibitors

### **Definition of Important Terms and Acronyms**

**AQHA-** The American Quarter Horse Association, located in Amarillo, Texas, is the world's largest equine breed registry and membership organization.

**AQHYA-** The American Quarter Horse Youth Association

**PCQHA-** Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Association

**AzQHA-** Arizona Quarter Horse Association

**Western States Affiliates (WSA)-** a non-profit venture between the Arizona Quarter Horse Association and Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Association

**Amateur** –division for non-professional exhibitors 19 years or older

**Open-** division for experienced exhibitors, trainers and professional horsemen

**Select-** division for exhibitors that are 50+ years old

**EMO-** Western States Championship Show's premier sponsor, an equine insurance agency.

**AQHA World Show-**most competitive AQHA show

## **Summary**

Having statistical evidence and research can be beneficial to any organization. A successful organization is made by constantly striving to better itself. As an AQHA member and competitor, the author will strive to provide the best research and analysis possible of the 2016 EMO Western States Championship Show. This analysis will help the Western States Affiliates Inc. determine the future of the EMO Western States Championship Show.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

The purpose of the project is to determine the success of the EMO Western States Championship Show in its first year; by collaborating with Western States Affiliates Inc. in measuring the success of the EMO Western States Championship Show in meeting its stated goals of creating a championship-style event as a stepping-stone between Novice Championship Shows and AQHA Open, Amateur, Select, and AQHYA World Shows (Western States Affiliates, 2015). The Review of Literature provides background and history shaping the project's purpose and need.

#### **Livestock Shows**

Livestock shows have been a vital part of the agriculture industry for many years. The first annual meeting of the Association of American Horse Shows dates back to January 29, 1918 (United States Equestrian Federation, 2015). These shows allow people to express their love of the industry, by bringing forth their most prized animals. The author will investigate the statistical significance of the EMO Western States Championship Horse Show as a stepping-stone between Novice and World Championship competitions. It is important for the Western States Affiliates to know whether or not their show is serving its intended purpose.



## **American Quarter Horse Association**

*History and Mission:* The AQHA came to be after a group of ranchers made it their mission to preserve the bloodline of the American Quarter Horse in 1940. The Quarter Horse was then known as the Steeldust horse due to their incredible abilities on the ranch, in war, and running the quarter mile faster than any other breed. “The mission of the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum is to preserve and interpret the history and modern uses of the American Quarter Horse and cultivate future enthusiasts. The American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum houses the living history of the American Quarter Horse. The Hall of Fame showcases the people and horses who shaped and changed the breed and the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA).” Understanding the history and mission of AQHA is crucial in understanding why it is important to host shows that will fulfill the needs of the AQHA members.



**Figure 1: Lucas Oil AQHA World Championship Show Statistics**

with an opportunity to exhibit their best horses (The American Quarter Horse Association, 2015).

### *AQHA World Championship Show*

*History:* The first World Show was held in Louisville, Kentucky at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in 1974. The show had 692 entries from 40 states and five Canadian provinces, with a class fee of \$100. The purse was valued at \$111,000. Since then, the championship show has grown tremendously (Vanderwende, 2014). The 2015 show brought in 4,762 entries, with over \$2.8 million in prize money. The goal of world championship shows is to continue to expand the AQHA and provide members

## **EMO PCQHA Novice Championship Show**

In 2010, the Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Association created the EMO PCQHA Novice Championship Show. The show was intended to create a place for novice level exhibitors to experience a championship-style event, while competing against others at the same skill level. The first and second years' events were a success and well liked by exhibitors. Novice exhibitor, Mia Mendola, stated, "The All Novice Championship show gave novice competitors a place to succeed." Nancy Keegan of Keegan Quarter Horses said "It's so intimidating for people just starting out. It's great to have an entry point (Britton-Baer)." The success of PCQHA's Novice Championship events did not go unnoticed.

## **Name Sponsor**

The EMO Agency, Inc., is a leader in equine insurance and boasts more than 25 years in the industry (The EMO Agency). The EMO Agency, Inc. was the proud name sponsor of the 2010 and 2011 EMO PCQHA Novice Championship Shows.

## **AQHA Novice Championships**

After the success of the inaugural EMO PCQHA Novice Championship Show, AQHA requested a partnership with the Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Association for the 2011 event (Horseman's News, 2010). In 2012, AQHA took over and expanded the championship-style event to the entire U.S. AQHA introduced the East and West Novice Championships. The AQHA Annual Report

stated “The shows were a huge hit and exceeded our expectations, with more than 1,300 entries at the SmartPak West Novice Championship Show in Las Vegas and more than 2,000 entries at the Nutrena East Novice Championship Show in Murfreesboro (AQHA, 2012)”. The 2013 and 2014 East and West Novice Championship events saw a steady increase in entries. In 2015, AQHA changed the names of the events to the SmartPak AQHA Level 1 Championships (West) and the Nutrena AQHA Level 1 Championships (East). The 2015 the East event had 2,129 entries, and the West Event had 1,923 entries; an increase of over 580 entries from the inaugural events. In 2016, AQHA added the Farnan AQHA Level 1 Championships (Central) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The inaugural show’s entries have not been released yet. Between the three championship events, there were over 6,000 entries (AQHA, 2015).

## **Surveys and Statistics**

*Statistics:* Statistics can be traced all the way back to 450 BC, when a man named Hippias tried to work out the dates of the first Olympic Games (Champkin, 2014). Statistics can be seen in use everyday. As Confucius once said, “Study the past if you would define the future.” The author’s goal is to study the statistics of the EMO Western States Championship show, to determine if it is successful.

*Surveys:* Surveys are a powerful tool when used correctly. Having a representative sample of the population will ensure the statistical survey is valid. When determining the length of a survey, less is more. The longer it is, the

less likely it is that people will take the time to complete the survey. People get bored with long surveys, and usually won't even bother to look at a survey more than a page and a half long. Also, requiring long answers may lose the audience (Kalsbeek, 2012).

### **The EMO Western States Championship**

After AQHA took on the Novice Championships and expanded to the rest of the United States, PCQHA and the Arizona Quarter Horse Association (AzQHA) identified the need to create a championship-style event for exhibitors between the novice level and world championship level. PCQHA and AzQHA created Western States Affiliates Inc. (WSA), a non-profit venture, to present the EMO Western States Championship (Western States Affiliates, 2015).

### **Inaugural Event Information**

Date: July 6-10, 2016

Location: South Point Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Leadership:

Doug Brown, **President**

Marc Ristow, **Vice President and Treasurer**

Carol Whittaker, **Secretary**

Doug Huls, **Event Planner**

Carol Whittaker, **Website and Public Relations Committee**

Cece Campbell, **Website and Public Relations Committee**

Chris Hocutt, **Awards Committee**

Dana Yingling, **Awards Committee**

Michele Pearson, **Awards Committee**

Cece Campbell, **Sponsorship Committee**

**Website:** [www.westernstateschampionship.org](http://www.westernstateschampionship.org)

**Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/WesternStatesChampionship>

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

The first step for developing this research project was contacting the Western States Affiliates Inc. in regard to performing the study. The author discussed the event with the president, Doug Brown, to help develop a thorough understanding of the event. After collaborating with the president, the important survey question components were thought out. The next step was to select a survey program and choose the best way to distribute the survey

#### **Survey Development**

Keeping in mind the stated goals of the EMO Western States Championship, the author developed nine survey questions. The stated goals of the event are to “Provide those with limited funds, travel time, or perceived lack of experience, an opportunity to show at a championships-style event located within the Western United States.”

Survey Questions:

1) Competitor Information:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Decline

2) Your Age

- ☐ 18–34 Years Old
- ☐ 35–50 Years Old
- ☐ 51+ Years Old
- ☐ Under 18 Years Old

3) Home State

Your answer

---



4) Have you ever competed at a Novice Championship Show (Level 1 Championship)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5) Have you ever competed at a World Championship Show (Youth, Amateur, Open, Select)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6) If yes—what was the most recent year?

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

7) If no— why not?

☐ Too far away

☐ Too expensive

☐ Not enough time

☐ Not competitive enough

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8) Why did you decide to compete at the EMO Western States Championship?

- ☐ Championship– Style Show
- ☐ Location at South Point in Las Vegas, NV
- ☐ Just another horse show
- ☐ I felt I'd be more competitive than at a World Championship Show
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9) Have you shown in a Level 1 class? If yes– how frequently?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Once
- ☐ 2-3 shows
- ☐ More than 3 shows

### Selecting a Survey Program

After researching several surveying programs, such as Survey Monkey, SurveyGizmo and Google Forms, it was determined the best program for this type of project is Google Forms. Google Forms has a number of desirable features, including: an unlimited number of responses, custom logos, colors, data exports and reports. An unlimited number of responses is important, as the author intends to conduct over 100 surveys. Custom logo and color capability will allow for an aesthetically pleasing survey, allowing the survey participants a more enjoyable experience. Data exports and imports allow downloading of survey

results into spreadsheets. Google Forms also creates custom charts and reports in minutes (Hoffman, 2014).

### **Conducting the Survey**

After considering several modes of conducting the survey, it was determined the best way to get participation is to walk around the event with an iPad. Often times surveys are inaccurate because the only people that respond are those passionate about the results turning out one way or the other. By having face-to-face contact and random selection, volunteer sample bias can be minimized.

## Chapter Four

### Survey Results and Discussion

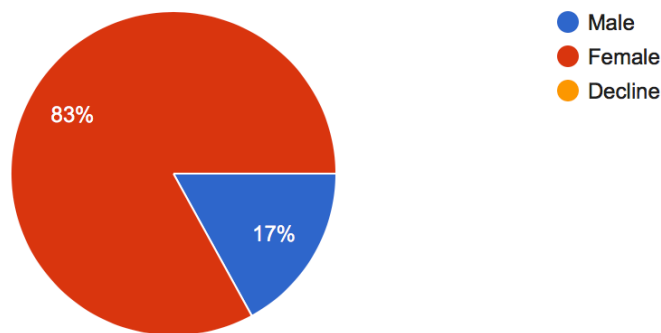
The following pages contain survey results and commentary regarding the data gathered. The data can be viewed online at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnHWa-7ZFFY4A-8Pry8UXIVl8q1wozN5GM1qXLd3F6tfgRIQ/viewform>

The data can be viewed in spreadsheet format at:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10dWHZGvdVjBFWK8NmwnLnCSixevclj0mDPzMRcnqdF\\_w/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10dWHZGvdVjBFWK8NmwnLnCSixevclj0mDPzMRcnqdF_w/edit?usp=sharing)

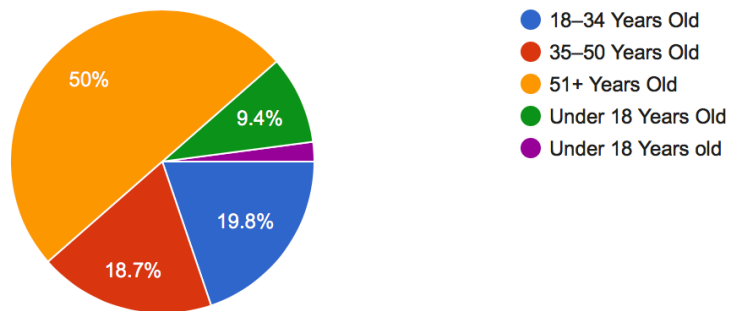
#### 1) Competitor Information: (100 responses)



**Figure 2: Survey question 1, responses of competitor information.**

Commentary: It's preferable to have an even male-to-female ratio in most surveys. However, it is likely these numbers are representative of the population competing.

## 2) Your Age (96 responses)



**Figure 3: Survey Question 2, responses of competitor age.**

## 3) Home State (96 responses)

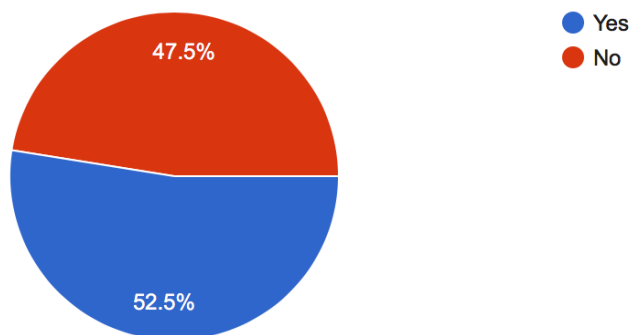
**Figure 4: Survey Question 3 responses to home state.**

California – 46  
Arizona – 23  
Washington–8  
Nevada–6  
Utah–3  
Idaho–3  
Alberta, Canada– 2  
New Mexico–1  
Oregon–1  
Colorado–1  
Texas–1  
Montana–1

Commentary: Eleven states and a Canadian province were represented at the EMO Western States Championship Show. This is considered an excellent turnout by event staff considering this is the first year the event has been offered.

#### 4) Have you ever competed at a Novice Championship Show (Level 1 Championship)?

(99 responses)

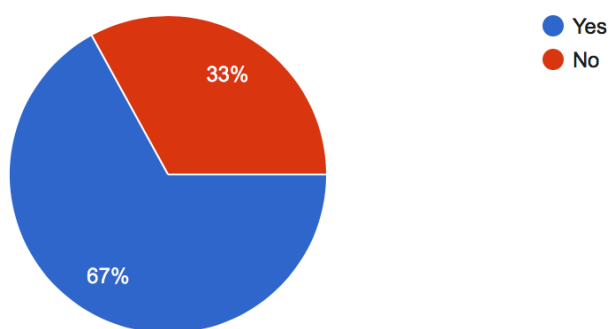


**Figure 5: Survey Question 4, responses about Novice Championship participation.**

Commentary: This shows more than half the competitors participated in another championship style show at the novice level. It is likely this number would be higher if more of the competitors were eligible to compete at a lower level.

#### 5) Have you ever competed at a World Championship Show (Youth, Amateur, Open, Select)?

(100 responses)



**Figure 6: Survey Question 5, responses to World Championship Show participation.**

6) If yes—what was the most recent year? (66 responses)

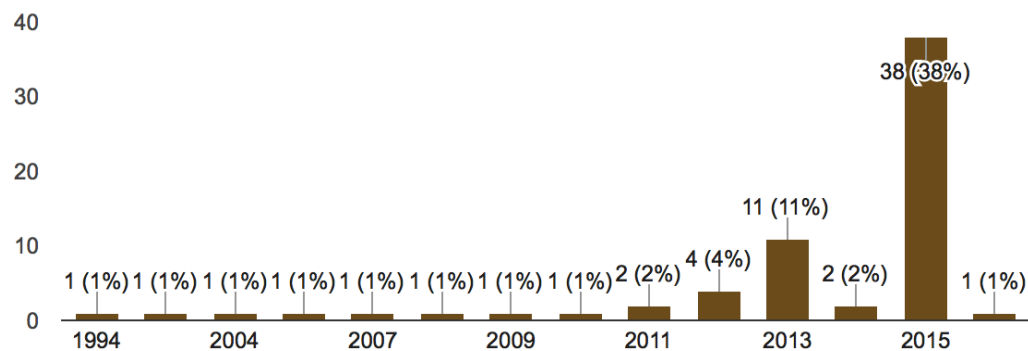


Figure 7: Survey Question 6, responses to most recent year shown.

7) If no— why not? (35 responses)

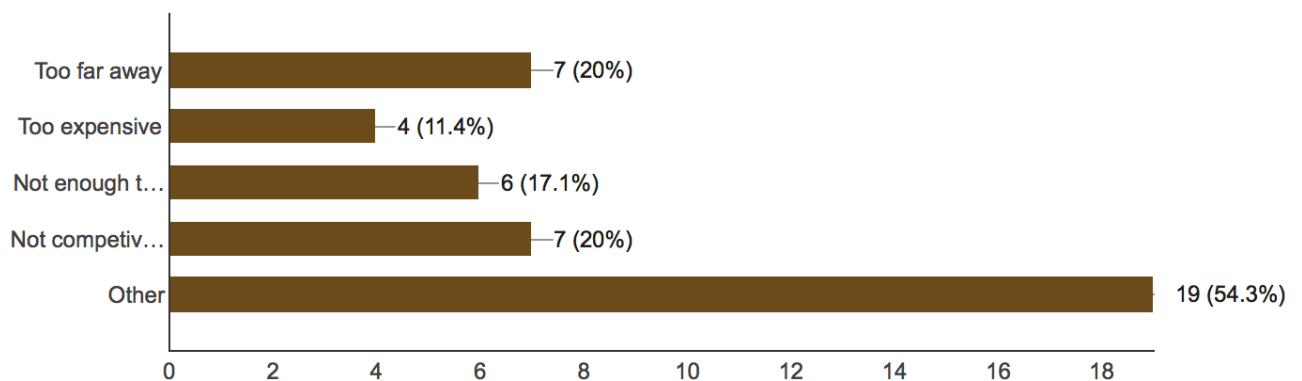


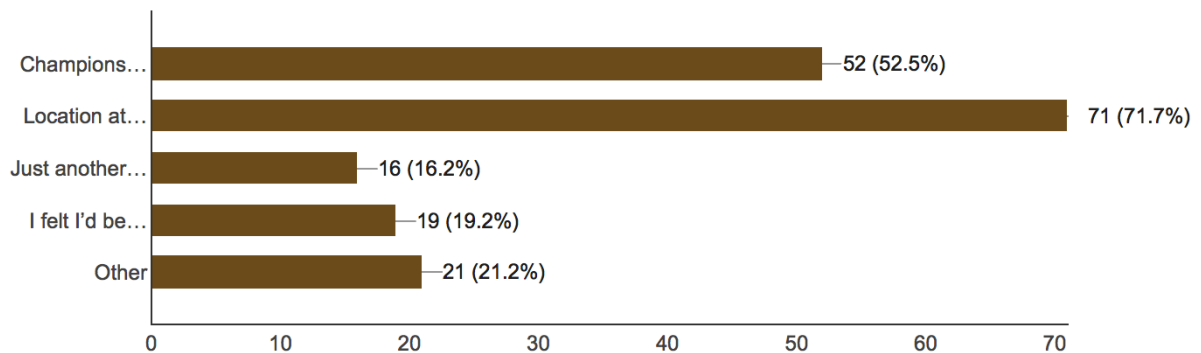
Figure 8: Survey Question 7, responses to reasons for participation.

**Other:**

Too young x 2  
Haven't qualified yet.  
Learning the sport  
New  
Rider not ready yet  
Mostly rodeo  
Not prepared  
Never qualified, tried

Too busy  
 Not enough time  
 Missed qualifying by 1 point. Going this year!  
 Lewis and I were still figuring out our details, but we will be attending this year.  
 Just moved to the USA  
 Haven't qualified yet!  
 Going in August  
 Not enough points  
 My schedule fluctuates  
 Had a baby

**8) Why did you decide to compete at the EMO Western States Championship?**  
 (99 responses)



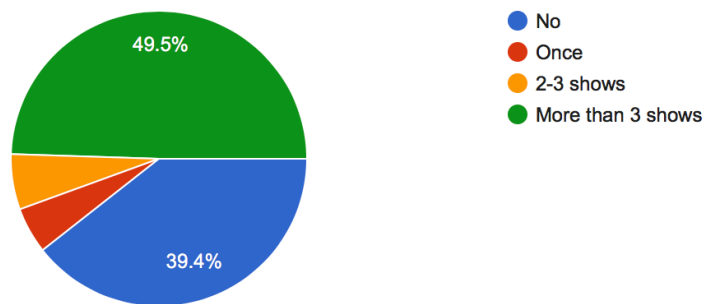
**Figure 9: Survey Question 8, responses to EMO Western States Championship Show participation.**

**Other:**

Qualified/experience x 3  
 Clients needed points  
 In support  
 Trainer came  
 Getting ready for the world show  
 Dates, no school  
 Horse was coming  
 NV, Visiting  
 Inaugural championship show (2)



9) Have you shown in a Level 1 class? If yes– how frequently? (99 responses)



**Figure 10: Survey Question 9, responses to Level 1 participation.**

### Analysis

*Goals of the EMO Western States Championship Show:* “Provide those with limited funds, travel time, or perceived lack of experience, an opportunity to show at a championships-style event located within the Western United States.”

*Limited Funds:* **11.4%** of respondents who **have not** attended a world show stated that attending a world championship show is too expensive.

*Travel time:* **20%** of the respondents who **have not** attended a world show stated that the travel distance is too far, and **17.1%** answered that they did not have enough time.

*Perceived lack of experience:* **20%** of respondents who **have not** attended a world show answered that they are not competitive enough.

*Other:* **54.3%** of respondents who **have not** attended a world show answered “other.”

Answers include:

Too young (2)

Haven't qualified yet.  
Learning the sport  
New  
Rider not ready yet  
Mostly rodeo  
Not prepared  
Never qualified, tried  
Missed qualifying by 1 point. Going this year!  
Lewis and I were still figuring out our details, but we will be attending this year.  
Just moved to the USA  
Haven't qualified yet!  
Going in August  
Not enough points  
My schedule fluctuates  
Had a baby

52% of respondents attended due to the championship-style nature of the event; indicating a strong desire for this type of show. This event allowed Quarter Horse owners and exhibitors to showcase their animals at a championship-style event, other than the Novice Championships and World Championships. Many exhibitors feel they are more competitive at the EMO Western States Championship, than they would be at a world show. The author interacted with over 100 attendees, many of which praised the event because it allows intermediate level riders a chance to shine.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary**

The objective of this project was to collaborate with Western States Affiliates Inc. in measuring the success of the EMO Western States Championship Show in meeting its stated goals--creating a championship-style event as a stepping-stone between Novice Championship Shows and AQHA Open, Amateur, Select, and AQHYA World Shows. The purpose of the project was to determine whether or not the 2016 EMO Western States Championship Show was successful, and analyze if it should become an annual event.

### **Recommendations**

The author faced several challenges while developing this project. The following list outlines some recommendations for the next time a similar project is pursued.

1. Google Forms is an excellent survey program. However, when using the program with an iPad, it can be difficult to navigate.
  - a. Be sure to become very familiar with the program before interviewing anyone. Do several practice surveys to make sure all the graphing aspects are working properly.
2. Obtaining enough surveys was crucial to the success of this project. During the process, the author discovered it was much easier to get respondents during the first three days of the five-day event.

- a. Horse shows can be exhausting. By the fourth day of competition, many exhibitors were tired and did not mingle in the barns after their events. This made it difficult to find new respondents. By the fifth day of competition, many exhibitors had already packed up and left the facility by 7am. The author recommends obtaining a majority of surveys during the first half of the show.
3. It is important to recognize the needs of individual horse show exhibitors. Do not ask exhibitors to take a survey unless they seem calm and relaxed. Some people do not want to be bothered right before or after competing in their event.

## **Conclusions**

Measuring the success of the 2016 EMO Western States Championship Show was a success because the author met the stated objectives of the project including: surveying at least 100 show exhibitors, providing a statistical analysis to Western States Affiliates Inc. and determining the show's levels of success as perceived by exhibitors.

The results of the survey indicate the EMO Western States Championship Show served its intended purpose. The author recommends evaluating a second year of this show to truly gain an understanding of the show's successes, needs and whether or not to carry out the event annually.

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